

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #59

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am for a 24-hour commercial fishing period on Thursday, August 22. For coho salmon management, the Copper River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. For the week ending August 24, the actual Copper River Delta survey index count was 12,930 coho salmon versus an anticipated range of 5,846–12,239 coho salmon. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, August 20 was 23,000 coho salmon with 218 deliveries reported. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 1.58 million sockeye salmon and 65,000 coho salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will remain closed to commercial salmon fishing. For coho salmon management, the Bering River District is anticipated to be on a 1-2 period a week schedule dependent upon escapement and harvest trends. For the week ending August 24, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 1,755 coho salmon versus a minimum anticipated range of 2,533–6,431 coho salmon. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, August 20 was 1,400 coho salmon with 5 deliveries reported.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 14-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22. The MBH AGZ will open to DRIFT GILLNET permit holders only during the period occurring on Thursday, August 22. No harvest was reported for the period that closed Monday, August 19. Cumulative harvest through August 19 was 508,000 sockeye, 213,000 chum, 1,600 coho, and 63,900 pink salmon. Video monitoring of salmon escapement on the Eshamy River is currently operational. The estimated sockeye salmon passage into Eshamy Lake from August 4 through August 15 is a minimum of 2,300 fish. Future openings will depend on assessment of sockeye salmon run entry into Eshamy River.

SEINE FISHERIES: Eggtakes are underway at SGH, and VFDA reports approximately 92% of the final goal has been completed through August 20, and an average fecundity (eggs per female) at SGH of 1,521. VFDA expects to complete their eggtakes on Thursday morning, and has recommended a Friday pink salmon cleanup fishery at the head of Port Valdez.

PWSAC completed its pink salmon cost recovery program on July 31, and reports a hatchery escapement estimate of 1 million pink salmon at AFK, CCH, and WNH. PWSAC began its eggtake operations at WNH yesterday, and reports a broodstock fecundity of 1,100. This lower than anticipated fecundity results in a projected need of additional fish to meet eggtake goals. With these increased goals in mind, PWSAC would expect a hatchery escapement of 953,000 pink salmon on August 21 at AFK, CCH, and WNH. PWSAC has provided recommendations that include area restrictions at WNH and AFK to allow for increased hatchery escapement. ADF&G will conduct an aerial survey of AFK, CCH, and WNH on August 22, and will incorporate PWSAC's eggtake results and hatchery escapement updates into management strategy beyond Friday, August 23.

Final harvest numbers by area for the August 18 and August 19 fisheries in Prince William Sound are unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that at least 1.55 million pink salmon were harvested on August 18, with another 1.32 million fish harvested on August 19. Cumulative pink salmon harvest totals for Prince William Sound **through August 19** include approximately 1.8 million VFDA cost recovery fish, 1.7 million PWSAC cost recovery fish,

and an estimated 81.8 million CPF fish. It is believed that there were fewer than 140 permit holders participating in the August 19 fishery, and it is expected that participation will continue to lessen over time.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District, south of a line from Entrance Point to Potato Point, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23. All Eastern District regulatory closed waters outside of Port Valdez will be in effect until further notice.

Waters in Port Valdez, east of a line from 61° 05.00' N, 146° 21.50' W to 61° 06.00' N, 146° 21.50' W and south of a line from 61° 06.00' N, 146° 21.50' W to 61° 06.00' N, 146° 15.10' W., will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 14-hour period beginning at 6:00 am on Friday, August 23. Waters inside of a line from the brown oil boom container van located between Solomon Gulch Hatchery and Allison Point, along the yellow SERVS buoys around Solomon Gulch Hatchery to the brown oil boom container east of the hatchery between VFDA and PetroStar will be closed to commercial fishing during this period. Regulatory closed waters at the head of Port Valdez are not in effect for this period. It is expected that a pink salmon cleanup fishery at SGH will continue through the weekend, with time and area to be announced on Friday, August 23.

NORTHERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northern District, **excluding the CCH SHA and THA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23. Time and area for future fishing opportunity in hatchery subdistricts will be dependent upon eggtake progress, and escapement at CCH.

COGHILL DISTRICT: Waters of the Coghill District, **excluding waters of the WNH SHA**, will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET and PURSE SEINE fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23. Time and area for future fishing opportunity in hatchery subdistricts will be dependent upon eggtake progress, and escapement at WNH.

NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Northwestern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southwestern District, **excluding waters of the AFK SHA**, will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23. Time and area for future fishing opportunity in hatchery subdistricts will be dependent upon eggtake progress, and escapement at AFK.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: Waters of the Montague District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for a 36-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, August 22, and ending at 8:00 pm on Friday, August 23. All Southeastern District regulatory closed waters will be in effect until further notice.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Friday, August 23.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized.

All MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.